

President's Health

Q. How you feeling today?

Q. How are you today?

Q. Can you show it to us?

Q. Show it to us.

The President: Do you think I'm Lyndon Johnson?

Q. Have you given up coffee altogether, sir?

The President: Not altogether, I don't think. I'm on Sanka and a decaf now.

Q. Are you going to have caffeine withdrawal? [*Laughter*]

Note: The President spoke at 10:07 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to June Nichols, Acting Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration; award winners Joann Schulz, Leo LeBlanc, Mark Eilrich, Paul Hsu, and Bruce Walker; Patricia F. Saiki, Administrator of the Small Business Administration; and Stanley M. Saiki, the Administrator's late husband. The proclamation is listed in Appendix E at the end of this volume.

Exchange With Reporters on the President's Health

May 7, 1991

Q. Mr. President, how are you feeling, sir? And is your heartbeat back to completely normal?

The President: Back to normal, and I'm feeling great. And this is a photo op at which I do not take questions. [*Laughter*] Same old me. Thank you for inquiring.

Q. Do you want Fast Track to succeed? Don't answer that. [*Laughter*]

The President. Come on, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International]. [*Laughter*]

Note: The exchange began at 10:23 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Following Discussions With President Mauno Koivisto of Finland

May 7, 1991

President Bush. President Koivisto, welcome again to the United States. It's a pleasure to try to return the hospitality you showed President Gorbachev and me in Helsinki last September. And we're very grateful for that hospitality, and I'd like to think that meeting was very constructive.

Our meeting today was only the latest of many exchanges that we have shared. It's been nearly a decade since you and I first met. Today, as always, I greatly value your view on world events and your efforts over many years to build the excellent relationship between the United States and Finland.

This visit, albeit very brief, gave me an

opportunity to thank you personally for Finland's constructive policy in the Middle East. Your country's strong leadership in the U.N. Security Council and the Iraqi Sanctions Committee last fall and your generous aid to the people suffering from Iraqi oppression represent Finland's fine tradition of active partnership in the community of nations.

This sense of responsibility led Finland, within a year of its admission to the U.N., to serve as part of the U.N. Emergency Force in 1956 following the Suez crisis. Finns have served bravely in virtually every peacekeeping force since then, contributing more troops than any other country. Your

nation continues this proud tradition in the current U.N. observer force in Kuwait and Iraq.

Finland and the United States enjoy a long and healthy trade relationship. Today, we touched on some new economic issues, including the advantages that could come from a Finnish purchase of our advanced aircraft. Let it be said in fairness that you made a pitch to us on several items that might benefit Finland trade, so this was a mutual exchange. We also discussed the new Europe, from economic integration to arms control, from new challenges to the CSCE to the continuing role of NATO in European security.

The United States and Finland share a deep interest in events in the Soviet Union. I've always valued the opportunity to exchange views with President Koivisto, who is a knowledgeable, an expert, a most perceptive observer of the U.S.S.R.

We discussed the very complex situation in the Baltic States. And I reaffirmed the policy of the United States to support a process of change through constructive and fair negotiations. We agreed on the inadmissibility of the use of force and the importance of pragmatism by all parties in the search for a solution to this problem of the Baltics.

The United States and Finland will continue to support the process of reform in the U.S.S.R. which was initiated by President Gorbachev. We want to see that process continue. We want to see it strengthened. And we will be ready to assist the Soviet and Republic governments in attaining the twin goals of democratization and market economic reform.

Finally, we discussed another issue of major importance to both of our countries: the transition to free markets and liberal political systems by the new democracies of Eastern Europe. We are determined to make every effort to assist them in their historic quest to remake themselves and find a place in the new Europe. This must be a priority for all Western countries.

As democratic peoples, Finns and Americans share many special bonds of friendship. Finns have long added to the American experience. Mr. President, your countrymen were among the first to settle in this country

350 years ago, establishing new lives in the Delaware River Valley. Over a century later, John Morton, a Finnish-American delegate to our Continental Congress, cast the deciding vote for our Declaration of Independence.

The ideals that led him—liberty and self-government—remain dear to both our nations. Just look to Philadelphia, 1776, and Helsinki, 1917. And since that time we've enjoyed over 70 years of warm diplomatic relations. And I look forward to continuing this friendship.

May God bless the people of Finland and the United States. Thank you, sir.

President Koivisto. Mr. President: Let me first thank you, Mr. President, for the excellent hospitality extended to me and my party here in Washington. We enjoyed our stay very much. It was also a great pleasure to meet you again and exchange views on the changing world situation.

When we last met in Helsinki in September at the American-Soviet top-level meeting on the Persian Gulf, the world was facing a direct challenge to the rule of law. The Iraqi aggression was repelled by the coalition. Kuwait is now free. Finland faced her responsibility in the United Nations Security Council in its decision to thwart the aggression. And now work must continue to build a new, equitable world.

Finland and the United States are different in many ways, yet we share the same values of freedom, democracy, justice, and human rights. We both want to see the world based on these fundamental principles. But principles are not enough. The economic, social, and the ecological problems can only be overcome through determined international cooperation.

For Finland, developments in Europe and particularly in our vicinity are of vital importance. While we must encourage progress everywhere towards our shared values, we must at the same time maintain stability. Reform efforts in Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union, now need our support. With the cold war behind us, no new devices must be drawn, but avenues of cooperation be opened for all.

We have also discussed the role of institutions which would promote stability and

change in Europe. One of them is the CSCE or the Helsinki process. I have invited President Bush and the other 32 leaders of Europe and North America to Helsinki for the next CSCE followup meeting due to begin in March 1992.

Mr. President, the review of our bilateral agenda showed that our relations are, indeed, in excellent shape. There is mutual appreciation and recognition of our respected roles in world affairs. There are long-standing bonds of friendship between our people. And there are good prospects for expanding the Finnish-American partnership.

I shall leave Washington with warm sentiments about our old and steady friendship. I hope to see you, Mr. President and Mrs. Bush, again in Finland in the not too distant future.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Q. Mr. President, you sounded a little hoarse. Are you all right?

President Bush. Yes, just fine.

Q. Have you got a cold?

President Bush. Talking too much. No, I don't think so.

Q. Mr. President, do you have anything from the meeting today between Gorbachev and Ambassador Matlock? It seemed like it went well.

President Bush. What was that?

Q. CFE. Matlock met with Gorbachev today, and the initial reports were positive.

President Bush. We haven't got it yet over here.

Note: President Bush spoke at 1:30 p.m. at the South Portico of the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union and Jack Matlock, U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union. Prior to their remarks, the two Presidents met privately in the Oval Office and with U.S. and Finnish officials in the Cabinet Room, and then attended a luncheon in the Old Family Dining Room.

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on President Bush's Meeting With President Francesco Cossiga and Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti of Italy

May 7, 1991

The President met with Italian President Cossiga and Prime Minister Andreotti for about 45 minutes in the Oval Office. The President and the two Italian leaders discussed the Middle East, European security issues, and Eastern Europe. On the Middle East, they discussed the need for continued urgent humanitarian relief for the Kurdish refugees and the need to provide security for their prompt and safe return to their villages. They underscored the important role of the United Nations in taking over and in facilitating the refugee situation.

President Cossiga and Prime Minister

Andreotti stressed the strong importance they attach to the Atlantic alliance and the indispensable role of the United States in assuring European security. In their discussion of East European issues, the three leaders expressed concern over growing violence in Yugoslavia. They stressed the importance of respect for human rights and democracy but also affirmed their support for Yugoslavia's political and territorial integrity. They noted that during this volatile period it is important for all sides to practice restraint and to work for a peaceful outcome to disputes.